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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001134

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - Aweys Alive and Seemingly Unharmmed

REF: A) Nairobi 1122 B) Nairobi 1132

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¶1. (SBU) Contrary to press reports and rumors on June 7 that Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys was killed or injured, the leader of Hisbul Islam (HI) appears to be alive and well. On the afternoon of June 8, Aweys held a press conference in Mogadishu and reportedly did not show any signs of injury. Conflicting reports suggested that Aweys had been injured during fighting in the town of Wahbo, Galgadud region. Aweys walked with no difficulties to the podium to address the press. He discussed ongoing fighting in Mogadishu, stating that HI attacks against the government and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are legal. Aweys accused the United States of creating piracy and fomenting the violence through attempts to eliminate the opposition using force. He said the U.S. has failed in its attempts to use force and political tactics to control Mogadishu. On June 7, Prime Minister Sharmarke proposed that Yusuf Mohamud Siad "Inda Adde" (Hawiye/Hader Gedir/Ayr), former HI leader now allied with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), be named Minister of State for Defense. President Sharif has not yet signed off on this appointment, and it has elicited critique from Hawiye/Abgal clan leaders who believe their clan is under-represented. At present, there is a tenuous calm in Mogadishu and surrounding regions with no reports of fighting. End Summary.

Aweys Holds Press Conference
Blames Conflict on the US

¶2. (SBU) On June 7, press reports, conflicting details from contacts and rumors suggested that HI leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys was either killed or injured in fighting in Wahbo, in the Galgadud region (Ref A). Following these reports, Aweys reportedly told his close associates that he would hold a press conference to refute these claims. The evening of June 7, sources at the presidency confirmed to us Aweys was unhurt and in Mogadishu. On the afternoon of June 8, Hassan Dahir Aweys held a press conference in the Yaqshid area off Industrial Road in Mogadishu. He spoke for approximately one hour about the fighting in Mogadishu and the Galgadud region and took reporters' questions.

¶3. (SBU) Aweys claimed the current clashes are "programmed from New York" and insisted that HI is engaged in a just fight against the TFG. He said the U.S. has supported warlords and Ethiopians before and that nobody should accept the "invaders'" intervention. Aweys said the TFG leadership, who he referred to as "those claiming to be

leaders," cannot be trusted by Somalis since they remain under the thumb of "invading forces" (AMISOM). He said the fighting will stop after AMISOM withdraws and leaves Somalis to resolve their own problems. Aweys blamed the killings and displacement in Mogadishu on the TFG. He said that HI does not have control of the media the TFG is using media to portray his group for being behind the peoples' sufferings. "We fire from AK 47s and the TFG retaliates with shelling in order to break our spirit by causing great human suffering," Aweys said. When asked if there is any dialogue between HI and the TFG, Aweys said it will come, but there is no dialogue at the moment.

Aweys Contrasts the "Real" ASWJ
With "Ethiopian Proxies" in Galgadud

¶4. (SBU) Aweys said he did not go to fight in Wahbo and there was no need for his presence because "there are others in charge of armed operations." Responding to journalists' questions regarding rumors about his injury/death, Aweys said they were the work of the defeated factions of ASWJ "in an attempt to console themselves and divert the attention from the disgraceful defeat they suffered in the battle." According to journalists at the press conference, Aweys showed no sign he is wounded as he walked upright without effort.

¶5. (SBU) At the press conference Aweys downplayed the role of Alhu Sunna Wal Jamaa (ASWJ) in the conflict. Aweys emphasized that his group agrees with the "genuine" ASWJ on the fundamental principles of Islam and regards them as respectable leaders/clerics who distinguished themselves as freedom fighters in pre-independence Somalia. Aweys offered tribute to ASWJ as a "respectable" group representing the majority of Somalis. He said ASWJ leaders such as

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Said Mohamed Abdulle Hassan, Sheikh Bashir, and Hassan Warsame never aided non-Muslims against Muslims as people who claim to be ASWJ are now doing. Aweys contrasted the "real" ASWJ with the faction in Galgadud who he described as "Ethiopian agents and warlords" out to implement Ethiopian policies in Somalia. He said those fighting in the name of ASWJ in Central Somalia are Ethiopian proxies, funded, armed, trained and backed by Ethiopia who makes no secret of its support. (Note: ASWJ is not a monolithic group. Although all ASWJ groups in Somalia have pledged support for the TFG, ASWJ factions in Central Somalia continue to fight al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam, and ASWJ leaders in Mogadishu often describe these groups in Galgadud and Hiran as "militaristic" (Ref B). End Note.)

Inda Adde Named
Minister of State for Defense

¶6. (SBU) In an unrelated development on June 7, Prime Minister Sharmarke announced his recommendation that Sheikh Yusuf Mohamud Siad "Inda Adde" (Hawiye/Hader Gedir/Ayr), be appointed as Minister of State for Defense. Although Inda Adde has allied himself with both the TFG and al-Shabaab in recent weeks, he appears to now be firmly in support of the transitional government. During the recent fighting in Mogadishu, Inda Adde and his militias played a key role in the TFG advances. This appointment appears to be an effort to reward Inda Adde by offering him a formal position and cementing his alliance with the TFG.

¶7. (SBU) As Minister of State for Defense, Inda Adde would report to Minister of Defense Mohamed Abdi Mohamed "Gandi." President Sharif must still approve the PM's recommendation to formally make the appointment. Although some within the TFG have expressed concern about the optics of appointing this warlord to such a high position, especially after he was so recently allied with al-Shabaab, they expect the TFG President to do so. This potential appointment has also angered Sharif's fellow Hawiye/Abgal clan members who claim that they are under-represented in the cabinet while the Haber Gedir, and the Ayr sub-clan in particular, are over-represented. With the sensitivities caused by equal clan

representation, President Sharif and PM Sharmarke are likely to face opposition as other sub-clans also demand new positions.

Comment

18. (SBU) Aweys' press conference has put to rest the rumors of his injury/death. In his comments, he remained staunchly opposed to the U.S., TFG and AMISOM, but articulated a more nuanced opinion of ASWJ. If Sharif approves the appointment of Inde Adde, he would be the Acting Minister of Defense since Gandhi is currently out of the country. At present, Mogadishu remains relatively calm and there have been no reports of violence. If Inde Adde assumes the TFG lead on defense, we may witness a new approach to strategies addressing Aweys, HI, and al-Shabaab.

RANNEBERGER